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SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Social Organization

Life Cycle

561 Dorobo men pass through three stages: *potik*, uncircumcised boys; *murenik*, circumcised men; and *apaiisiek*, elders. Boys are circumcised between the ages of [304] 15 and 18 years, and may marry at any time after circumcision when their circum- [582] stances allow. Some men in fact never marry at all, but live alone, getting occasional [884] help from women in the settlement, and depending for sexual satisfaction on surrep- [589] titious affairs with wives of age-mates. Women are first *tipik*, girls; then *yosotik*, married women; and finally, when they begin to look old, *engitokisiek*, old women. Girls marry soon after they have been circumcised.

Kinship and Behaviour

602 The existing Dorobo relationship system, *tiliet*, is structurally similar to that of [171] the Nandi, and uses a number of Nandi terms; but it is less regular and includes in the *tiliet* a larger number of persons than does the Nandi. Moreover, the collective term *macokor* (which I did not find in use as a true relationship term in Nandi) is used by the Dorobo as the proper term for a number of people terminologically differentiated by the Nandi.

601 Within the *tiliet* the chief terms are: In the third ascending generation, all males are *macokor* and all females *makikat;* in the second ascending generation, all males are *kuko* or *akui* and all females *koko*.

In the first ascending generation, the terms are: *papa* = father, father's brothers, and mother's sister's husband; *eiyo* = mother, mother's sisters, and father's brother's wife; *pukot* = father's sister; *konyit* = father's sister's husband; *mama* = mother's brother and his wife. Terms used by women are *sindet* = father's sister and father's brother's wife; *apulaiyo* = mother's brother; *eiyo* = mother's brother's wife; and *konyit* = mother's sister's husband.

In a man's own generation, his brothers, sisters, and mother's sister's son and daughter are *kesenda;* mother's brother's son and daughter, *mama;* and the son and daughter of his father's brother and father's sister are *macokor*. Women's terms which differ from these are: *apulaiyo* = mother's brother's son and daughter; *eiyo* = mother's sister's son and daughter.

In the first descending generation, *apaa* includes son, daughter, brother's son and daughter; *mama*, sister's son and daughter, and mother's brother's son and daughter; *macokor*, father's brother's children's children, and father's sister's children's children. In the second descending generation, both sexes are *akui*, except mother's brother's children's children's children, which are *mama;* and mother's sister's children's children's children, *kesenda*.

Among affines, wife's father is *pamogo;* wife's mother, *poker;* wife's brother, *konyit* and his wife, *poker;* wife's sister *pukot* and her husband, *kipukotiot;* wife's brother's son and wife's sister's son, *apaa;* wife's brother's daughter and wife's sister's daughter, *pakuo*. Husband's father is *pakuo* and his mother, *poker;* husband's brother *konyit* and his wife, *sindet;* husband's sister, *kamati* and her husband, *poker;* husband's brother's children, *lakuet;* and husband's sister's children, *apulaiyo*.

602 In the *tiliet* it is the *father's brother* who stands out and occupies the special ●604 place in family life that the mother's brother does among the Nandi; not a few Dorobo did not know their mother's brother's name. Owing to the nature of Dorobo life, the father's brother is continually in contact with his brother's children, and his relations with his nephews are even closer than those of the Nandi *mama* with his nephews.

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A striking difference between the Dorobo and Nandi systems is that whereas Nandi may not marry any person in the *tiliet*, the Dorobo were insistent that a man might marry his father's sister's daughter's daughter, the girl whom he calls *macokor*, a person definitely in the *tiliet*. This type of marriage does not seem to occur now; but did in the past. Marriage with a wife's sister is considered objectionable.

Behaviour patterns may be summed up in a statement made by a Dorobo that " a man does not use bad language to his father, though his father may beat him as a child, nor does he use bad language to his father's brother; he does not speak of dirty things, nor of sexual matters, to his mother and his mother's sister, for it is bad to do so; but we are all on terms of friendliness and ' clean fun.' " Generally speaking, seniority is a matter of age, except with respect to the father's brother. Between a man and members of his own generation considerable latitude is allowed; but elders must always be shown respect. Where the claims of relatives are concerned, the amount of contact is important, for even a close relative who lives a long way off and is seldom seen cannot expect and will not receive so much respect as one who lives nearby and is well known. On a husband's part, there should be complete avoidance of his wife's mother, though this may be relaxed by degrees as he gets older; conversation with the wife's father should be limited to greetings.

Pre-marital Sex-life

Owing to the small number of Dorobo and the consequent shortage of women for wives, men have little in the way of pre-marital sex-life; and if a man does manage to acquire a lover, he often marries her.

Bridewealth

This varies according to circumstances, and Dorobo statements about it are conflicting. In 1927 it was said to consist of large quantities of honey-wine and of monkey-skin caps; but in 1930 the standard was one cow (with calf if still suckling), one ox, and four goats. The number of goats varied in the recorded cases from two to six, and in one case the cattle amounted to four oxen. A man also gives his father-in-law presents of honey-wine and a fur cap or two; thus marriage is more of a drain on a man's resources than formerly.

Betrothal

A man chooses his wife himself, and arranges the preliminaries with the girl's father during two visits at which he gives him presents of honey. After the second visit the father calls the clan council together and publicly gives his consent to the marriage.

Marriage

The marriage ceremonies are conducted by an elder known for the time as *patum*, who brings the bride to her future husband's home, where the guests are already assembled feasting. The girl enters the hut in which the ceremony is to take place, and in the presence of witnesses the *patum* gives her to the man, saying, *Koipuncin cicoto*, " you now belong to this man." He then binds some *sekutiet* grass on the man's right wrist, and an old woman binds some of the same on the girl's right wrist. They are now married. The *patum* then sets up an erection of *sekutiet* grass called *tumdo* which is smeared over with cow-dung; this the wife has to knock down and tread upon. After this, the pair are left alone, and the marriage is consummated. Next day the *tumdo* is trodden into the floor and plastered over with cow-dung, for it must not be seen. The pair are then shaved, he by the *patum*, she by the old woman, and the hair is buried in cow-dung under an erection of sticks called *koroiot*, which is set up in great secrecy by the *patum*. It is essential

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a Nandi, and her husband is spoken of with less respect than Kicoti's, though both men are referred to as *konyit*. Their children are called *mama*.

His father's sister Cepulpul and her husband Turiepuku are both dead, and if he speaks of them it is by the terms *pukot* and *konyit*; but her son son Kipkoiec is, as *macokor*, on the same footing as Leii and Kimaiyo, the sons of his father's elder brother Kaola, allowing for the difference of age-set. Pilo is a *Nyongi*, as also is Leii; but Kimaiyo is a *Maina*. On the other hand, Kimaiyo is a policeman, which somewhat outweighs the difference. Cepkemoi and Cerob, the daughters of Pilo's father's younger brother Kiptoo have lessened themselves to a certain extent in old-fashioned Dorobo eyes by marrying Nandi (though Dorobo-Nandi marriage has been practised for a long time), and they live at a distance. The wife of Leii and the husband of Cepkumuren, Pilo's other *macokor*, are both Dorobo, and although they live near the forest, there is a good deal of intercourse between their families. All these people are spoken of as *macokorennyon*, and addressed as *macokoronni*, *macokor*, or by name. Their spouses are spoken of as *konyit*. Though Kimopo Arap Mining, the husband of Cepkumuren, is *konyit* to Pilo, his relatives are outside the *tiliet* as far as Pilo himself is concerned (though not of course for Cepkumuren), and this applies also to the relatives of his sisters' husbands; such people when on terms of friendship and visiting are addressed and referred to by name, or they may be spoken to by the word *leiye*, a general term of address to any person of either sex with whom one is friendly. An old woman like Cesikirikat, Arap Mining's mother (not named in the genealogy), would not be addressed as *leiye*, however, but as *koko* "grandmother" or *cepiosonni*, "old woman", though not related in any way, but out of respect because Pilo is a friend of Arap Mining, and often meets his relatives, including Cesikirikat.

Kaola and Kiptoo, the brother's of Pilo's father, lived for many years at Cepkunyuk, four miles from Kiptarakon, close to and inside the boundary of the Nandi Reserve; but in 1939 they went to live in Sosoiyo near the forest. At that time, both of them were more active than their brother Kipkatam (Pilo's father) who, if he had been a European, would have been described as "bed-ridden"; and for practical purposes Kaola took the place of a father to Pilo and his brothers and sisters. Kipkatam was deaf, nearly blind, almost speechless, and hardly able to move; so when Pilo wanted to consult anyone, he turned to Kaola, or if he was away, to the slightly younger Kiptoo.

It will be seen that a sister's children are not *apaa*, like a brother's, but *mama*. Pilo's sister's children are a typical case. They live at a distance, and so are as remote from him as all the descendants of his mother's brother (*mama*) Nekoi who, with his wife and his son in law Kilanya and his family, lives at Ngatepkong on the far side of the forest and has little to do with Pilo. Moreover, the only link between Pilo and Nekoi, his mother Keuarie, is there no longer, for she died some years ago; so Nekoi and his family are just spoken of as *mama* — when it is necessary to speak of them at all, for though they exist they count very little in Pilo's life.

Between Pilo and his brother Coimim there is a good deal of inter-

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who stands in the relation of father's brother to the younger members of the group, as in the diagram of Pilo's family above, in which both sets of children have a father's brother living close at hand. In a clan group there might be no father's brother actually in the settlement, but often he would not be far off, for the tendency is to settle in defined groups, and not isolated to the same extent as among the Nandi, where a family may live alone without forming part of a settlement though still a member of the parish. This point is important, for the father's brother plays the same part in a child's life that the mother's brother does among the Nandi.

The family, consisting of father, mother, and children, lives in close contact with one or more families, and sometimes includes the husband's father or mother (I came across no case where both were alive together). These families give the Dorobo child his first experience of human beings. Kinship usages are determined to a certain extent by environment and way of life, for under forest conditions and a hunting economy the father is of necessity away from home a good deal, and young children are much in the society of their mothers and *the other women of the settlement. This* of course is true of other types of society; but in a pastoral society, such as the Nandi, for instance, the father is not, under compulsion of seeking the day to day food supply, obliged to go away from the homestead if he feels disinclined; and there is no doubt that a Dorobo child of tender years saw much less of his father than a Nandi child. When food must be got as it is needed, and when it is scanty or difficult to store, the father, on whom falls the duty of getting it, must be away much more than the man whose cows are close at hand, or whose cultivation produces a crop which he can store.

Till a child is weaned, which may be at the age of twelve months or thereabouts, it is in closer contact with its mother than anybody else, and the father leaves it more or less alone. When the mother has to go out to do her share of food-getting, the child is left at home in charge of its elder sister if it has one, or with its father's mother; failing these, some woman or girl of the settlement will look after it. A Dorobo mother cannot take her baby with her when searching for vegetable food in the forest, for it cannot conveniently be carried on the back in such surroundings; nor can she, like the agriculturalist, lay it down under a tree while she works, because it would not be safe to do so in the forest. This habit persists to-day, and even when a woman goes to work in her *shamba* [10] the baby is left behind in somebody's care. But a woman's food-questing is done much more quickly than a man's hunting, and she is soon back at home; the *shamba*, too, is not so far away that she cannot get back to the child quickly if need be.

The attitude of a man to his wife is profoundly affected by physical and environmental conditions. The shortage of women and the difficulties of getting a wife (especially when cattle are becoming the medium of bride-

[10] The Swahili word *shamba* = cultivated land, field, farm, is current throughout Kenya. Since it is a shorter and simpler word than the English equivalent, I shall use it in the sense of a plot of cultivated land.

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888 helps his wife to bring up his children, continuing her claim on him in affection which outlasts childhood into old age.

596 My chief friend and informant among the Dorobo, Kimopo arap Mining, lived, during the period of my field-work, at Kipukua, with his mother Cesikirikat, and his family consisted of the following:

Cesikirikat ♀

♂ Arap Mining = Cepkumuren ♀

♂ Kiprotic ♂ Kiptuma ♂ Tiongoi Situni ♀ girl not yet named, born 3 Dec 1938.

[342] [361] In July 1938 he was living in a flat-topped hut in the middle of his section of the settlement; but by December of the same year he had moved to a new hut with a pointed roof outside the *shamba*. His mother's hut was about 300 yards away at the other end of the *shamba*. His three boys (all *Ilume* age-set, he himself being a *Nyongi*) ranged from about four years old upwards, and Situni, the elder girl, was about seven. At this time he [513] [231] slept in the back part of the hut, the *incor*, where his goats are kept at night, and his wife slept with the children in the front part, the *koima*. This was because she was suckling a baby. Strictly, Arap Mining should have gone to sleep in another hut, but since this was not possible for several reasons, the wall dividing the *incor* from the *koima* was allowed to make the *incor* count as a separate hut (the original type of Dorobo hut has no partition at all).

855 One day I arrived rather early and found that Cepkumuren had gone across the valley to get a new water-pot, leaving Arap Mining in charge of the children. Situni looked after the baby, but still he found his responsibilities rather a heavy burden, and was glad when his wife returned a little before noon. Cepkumuren fed the baby, sent the children indoors to rest, and went down to the river to wash. At this hour, when there is no particular work to be done, the older people sleep. On some days Cesikirikat comes to Arap Mining's *shamba* to help with the cultivation: Cepkumuren [241] normally works there too, but not every day while the baby is so young. When she does go, Arap Mining goes with her, and the baby is left with Situni. But the *shamba* is not so far away that Cepkumuren cannot hear the children if anything goes wrong.

855 604 The Dorobo elementary family might thus seem to be independent and self-contained. But it is not so really, and other relatives have a share in the upbringing of the children, not in spite of the parents' authority, but in support of it, and the relative who must be considered next to the parents from the Dorobo point of view is the father's brother, *papa*, who often lives in the same settlement, or if not, only a short distance away. This person, especially when he is an elder brother, has a position of authority over his brother's children at least equal to that of their father. His wife, a classi-

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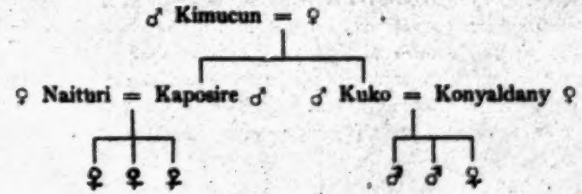
ficatory mother, *siyo*, has a similar position, and if the father's mother is not alive, or living far away, she takes the grandmother's place in helping her husband's brother's wife; and being younger than the grandmother, can give more active assistance. This was the case with two brothers both married, whose mother was dead:



To Kaposire's children, Konyaldany took the place of the grandmother; and Naituri did the same for Kuko's children,. The father's brother is the equivalent, as an authority in the lives of children, of the mother's brother among the Nandi and elsewhere, and is as near as possible a second father. Patrilocal residence as well as other factors no doubt account for this; and the effect is that the father's brother is someone to be reckoned with, a man with whom a boy should keep on good terms, and one of whom permission must be obtained before a boy is circumcised. Kimutai arap Ruto is Arap Mining's brother. He lived in the same settlement at Kipukua, and saw his brother's children every day. When he greeted them, he said, *Sopai, leiye*, and they answered, *Epa, papa*. (He [illegible]*w* is used loosely as a term of familiarity.) The father's brother gives the children food and other things; he teaches them much of what it is necessary for them to know, and when they ask him questions, like what is this grass called? what are you going to do with that piece of wood? what made those marks on the ground? and so forth, he answers them in such a way that question and answer become part of their education. He shows them his bow, arrows, and quiver, his knives, his honey bags. He takes them into the forest and tells them how people look after their bees, how they make honey-barrels, and how they take honey. He teaches them to use firesticks, and explains the magical observances towards bees and honey.

The mother's brother, *mama*, the father's sister, *puko*, and their spouses (f. *mama*, m. *konyit*) are in a different category from the father's brother. Not only do they live in different settlements, but the mother's brother has no special position of authority. And while all Dorobo to whom I talked knew their father's brother, many did not know their mother's brother, either by name or by sight. Others knew his name, but had never seen him; and in one or two cases when I was taking down genealogies men had to ask their friends what their mother's brothers' names were. It is thus quite clear that the mother's brother is of little account, and that the father's brother is a much more important person.

Yet on occasion the mother's brother is accorded a respect that is not his customary due. Arap Mining was a great follower of tradition, but

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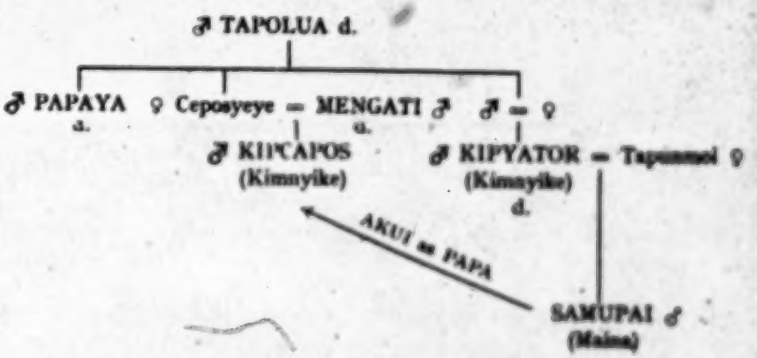
he respected and feared both his father's brother and his mother's brother. When the time came for him to be circumcised, he went first to his *papa* to ask permission, and then to his *mama*; both consented, and both oiled him [12]. If his *papa* got angry with him, he gave him a goat, a new honey-barrel, or some beer; and he treated his *mama* in the same way. Such cases are perhaps not normal, and the respect shown to the *mama* is due to individual circumstances, for Arap Mining was taught by his mother to like his *mama*, and unlike most Dorobo he saw a good deal of the man.

When a man has no father's brother to whom he can turn, other people can act as substitutes, as in the case of a man named Samupai arap Yator, whose father was dead, and had no brothers or sisters:



In this case, Kipcapos, the son of Samupai's father's father's sister was alive, and of the same age-set as his father Kipyator. Though terminologically merely *akui*, Samupai regarded Kipcapos as a father's brother, visited the old man whenever he went near where he lived, and treated him exactly as if he was really *papa*. In another case, a father's father's brother's son, also *akui*, took the place of a non-existent father's brother.

The people who are of primary importance in the life of a child are therefore his parents, his father's parents (especially the mother), and his father's brother. The father's sister while still young and unmarried may live with her parents and thus for a time come in contact with the child. She will thus be able to help the mother for so long as she remains unmarried. But once she has got a husband she is likely to live elsewhere and may pass right out of the child's life, since there may be no man in the settlement who is not either related to her, or of the same clan. In the settlement at Kipukia where Arap Mining lived, there were five other men, Cemandi a married man with two children, and his unmarried brothers Malakwen, Kipsang, and Kipungoi, together with Arap Mining's unmarried brother Kimutai

[12] A boy must get permission to be circumcised from his father's brother, who oils his head and face in token of consent.

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Between a man and the members of his own generation considerable latitude is allowed. As the Dorobo put it, *Kicapkei, kiarenenkei, kilowcinkei, 'Kumin kon, agut kum kamat', anu ki lakak.* ("We use bad language to one another, we play together, we say to each other, 'May your father lie with you, or may you lie with your mother', because we are children", i.e. we are all of the same age.) These rude phrases, however, must never be used to elders, and to do so is very shameful; but spoken to members of one's own age-set or generation they are quite harmless and have no sinister implications. Between the sexes of the same generation there may be a perfectly innocuous intimacy, between brother and sister, between *marakor, mama,* and *kwanda,* which allows any kind of joking and language but stops short of actual sexual intercourse; and in spite of this license, such evidence as there was indicated that incest was not common. Between members of the same generation, especially in youth and early middle age, there is also a strong bond in the shape of mutual help and support among those who live near each other, extending to all departments of home life. The effect of propinquity must not be overlooked, and the claims of even a close relative who lives a long way off and in whom soon may be reduced to insignificance.

The general attitude of a man's own children to the children of his *marakor,* his *mama,* and his *kwanda,* is the same, in that they are all like his own children, who may be played with or reproved when necessary, but without the use of any bad language or abuse. To these children to whom he is 'father's brother' there is of course the special attitude that I have already described. But between members of this generation there is a marked terminological difference:

so that by classification all the children on the father's side are *marakor,* while those on the mother's side are both *mama* and *kwanda*; and a man's own children are *apan,* while those of his sister are *mama.* When the children are small these differences are merely nominal and not apparent; but as they grow older a distinction tends to arise between those on the father's side and those on the mother's side, especially between *marakor* and *mama*; and this is emphasized by the possibility that a man might marry his *marakor* (father's sister's daughter's daughter), even if he seldom or never does so in fact.

Between a man and the second descending generation there is a relationship of respect, for terminologically his grandchildren are equated with his grandfather. In practice, however, this generation counts as far as he

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Next day the mother and the offending children hasten to grandmother's with food. The old woman accepts the food and spits on the children, saying at the same time, *Sov kwaanik ake ne ejwijwiikoo* ("Peace, I spit on you and to-day you will flourish"), thus both forgiving them and removing any possibility that her curse may have an ill effect. The mother's mother may do the same sort of thing, if she lives near enough for the children to visit her.

603 606

Arap Mining's wife's mother and father lived at Kipkenren, and his children used to visit them there, always taking presents with them. When Arap Mining visited the old people, as he did sometimes in the company of his children, he met them on ordinary terms, entered their hut, and sat down inside, *ei kowo kakei* ("to talk of our affairs"), and his mother in law gave him food to eat. By this time, the strictness of avoidance had been much relaxed, for he was a staid and respectable man of forty or so. But though his children may sleep in this hut, he may not do so on any account, and if he stays too long in the hut or [illegible]

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away to a neighbour's hut. The father of her Kaale used to live at Cepkunyuk in Nandi, a good two hours' walk from Kipsaben; but in July 1938 he moved to Kipkenren, so his son Loti was working on Kapchemsa Farm close by. A small hut was built for Kaale and his wife in a maize shamba belonging to some Nandi, and the old Dorobo were allowed to live there in return for guarding it. Loti, a Maina, is Arap Mining's wife's brother, and therefore owes to his children; but though his sister's children do not go to see him, he sometimes goes to Kipsaben to see them. This was one of the few instances of a mother's brother being on all intimate with his sister's children; and Cepkemuntu taught her children to like Loti, who would greet them by saying *Nyhei, kakwa* ("greetings, children"), and then spitting on them and saying *Sov, kakwa* ("Peace, children") to which they would answer *Eye, owwa* ("Morning, uncle"). But in spite of this friendly intercourse, Loti never played the part in their lives that Arap Mining's brother Kimaiyo did; and his share in their training was very small.

IV. The Clan

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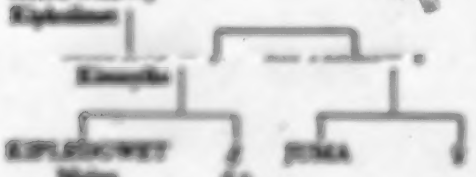
The clan, *oot*, plural *ootwek*, is an exogamous patrilineal group with a name and a totem, *kimet ap oot*, or simply *kimet*, "the animal [of the clan]". Of the eleven clans listed, the existence of eight is attested by genealogies and the census; the remaining three are reported to exist or to have existed. All but one of these clans have but one totem each; the exception has three, the principal of which it shares with another clan, so unusual feature in that it is the group not the totem that is important, the clan being a social group rather than a group of people symbolically related through the clan animal. All the clan names but one are taken from Nandi clan names; the exception seems to be of Dorobo origin. Some of these names are taken from the principal name of a Nandi clan, others from subsidiary names, for the Nandi clan has (i), a principal name by which it is generally known, and (ii) a subsidiary name or nickname which is

[illegible]

and education of children may be grouped according to the amount of influence they exert and as primary authorities are to be included: F., M., F.Br., F.Br. W., F.F., F.M.; as secondary authorities, M.Br., M.Br.W., F.Si., F.Br. H., M.Si., M.Si.H., and eldermith (relations) in the persons of elsewhere living in the group. The M.Br. does not occupy the same place with regard to a child that he does in Nandi. He does not live in the same group, whereas the F.Br. frequently does, and so the F.Br. has the greater influence on the child. Many Dorobo, in fact, have had little or nothing to do with their M.Br., and some do not even know their names. In the following Kalpsi genealogy,



Kipkoguyet had hardly ever seen Kipsaros, and could not even remember his name, till another person told him. Jame similarly did not know the name of his M.Br.

The relationship system of the Dorobo thus differs from the Nandi, especially in the following:

(1) Children of F.Br. and F.Si. are classed as *MAKWEEK*.

(2) Children of M.Si. are classed with Br. and Si. as *KEEEYEK*.

(3) Children of age and his Br. are classed as *AP.A.K*.

(4) Children of M.Br. and age's Si. are classed as *MAMA*.

(5) Children in the 2nd descending generation are *AGWE*.

(6) The F.Br. takes the place of M.Br.

B. Age-sets and behaviour patterns.

The Dorobo have seven age-sets, *Ipkinde, pl. Ipinogik*, with three age-grades in each set. These sets are borrowed from the Nandi, and have the same 15-year intervals, and the same three sub-divisions.